



Montgomery County
Commission for Women

Annual Report

July 2017-June 2018

Advancing Women's Rights in Montgomery County Since 1972



Montgomery County *Commission for Women*

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2018

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July 2017– June 2018

Officers

Lorna Forde
President

Nicole Drew
First Vice President

Tracy Evans
Second Vice President

Karmen Rouland
Secretary

Tiffany Boiman
Vernisha Greene

Giulia McPherson
Diana Rubin
Monica Ramirez (partial term)

Britt Hogue
Katie Smith
Donna Rojas

Tia Zeno (partial term)

Erica Dean (partial term)

Angela Whitehead Quigley

CFW Team

Jodi Finkelstein
Executive Director

Merci Wolff
Events and Programs Director

Carmen Kaarid, Asia Parrott and Constance Roberts
Interns

Amy Meldau and Jessica Jones
Re-Entry Project Coordinators



President's Message

Lorna Phillips Forde

It has been an honor and pleasure to serve as president of the Montgomery County Commission for Women for the last two years. On behalf of the Commission, I would also like to thank the County Executive and County Council for their continued support. This county's commitment to equity, inclusion, and openness has allowed the Commission to assist women since 1972.

My six year term ended this fiscal year and I am deeply honored to have served. Looking back, six years seemed to quickly pass by. I am proud to have supported the implementation of our re-entry support group for formerly incarcerated women along with the expansion of the county's human trafficking task force. During my tenure, and under the leadership of numerous commissioners, the task force transitioned from a temporary committee to a long standing one through county legislation.

The Commission's success is made possible because of the dedication, hard work and energy of the 15 commissioners appointed to serve on the board. It is rewarding to work with such talented and enthusiastic individuals committed to enhancing our community.

Lorna Phillips Forde



Executive Director's Report

Jodi Finkelstein, MSW

In 1972, the Montgomery County Council passed a law establishing the Montgomery County Commission for Women. That law charges the Commission with the responsibility of advising the County Executive, the County Council, the public, and the agencies of the county, state and federal governments on the issues of concern to women.

The law provides that there will be 15 commissioners, county residents who are each appointed to three-year terms and serve without compensation. Nine of the commissioners must be endorsed by organizations concerned with women's issues and six must serve independently. The Commission meets in full once per month, and commissioners meet in committees in the interim to work on its projects and initiatives. On the average, it is estimated that commissioners contribute about four hours each week working on behalf of Montgomery County's women and girls.

The Commission was created to advance women's equal and full participation in the benefits, responsibilities and opportunities of society. In achieving its mission, the Commission examines laws, policies, practices and procedures, identifies disparities that impact women and advocates remedies for those disparities. Over its 40-year history, the Commission has undertaken successful and effective initiatives on issues such as educational equity, family equity in the courts, sexual harassment in the workplace, pay equity, workplace flexibility, violence in relationships including teens, immigrant women, domestic workers' rights, single mothers and poverty and much more.

The pages that follow highlight the work of the Commission in FY 18. It was filled with a great deal of advocacy and outreach on behalf of girls and women in Montgomery County.

Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee

Chairs: Diana Rubin and Tiffany Boiman

Committee Members: Erica Dean, Nicole Drew, Lorna Forde, Giulia McPherson, Katie Smith

To be more effective advocates for our legislative priorities given our limited resources and time, the PAL Committee made a strategic decision to concentrate on four legislative goals rather than to advocate for a wider range of issues, as we have in the past. We also decided to make a greater effort to raise awareness about these issues in the community and to encourage advocacy on the part of women and girls (and other interested citizens) in the community.

Specifically, for the issues we chose to make a strategic legislative priority, we determined to:

Testify or Submit Testimony on Priority Bills: We worked to assure that a Commissioner could testify in person on behalf of each of our priority bills, or if that was not possible, to submit testimony in support of those bills on behalf of the Commission.

Conduct Social Media Outreach to Increase Awareness and Action: We reached out on Twitter and Facebook to inform the community about the substance and progress of our priority issues and our positions on them. This is the first time our Committee had done so.

Action Alerts: Action Alerts were sent via our e-newsletter which is distributed to more than 10,000 people. These alerts described the priority bills and the issues they addressed, and actions that needed to be taken by the community to affect the legislative process. We coordinated our alerts with partner organizations to ensure the greatest impact.

Traditional Media: Commissioners wrote op-ed pieces on a variety of topics, one of which was published by the political blog, Maryland Matters.

Our top legislative priorities this year and the actions we took to support their enactment into law are as follows;

1. Termination of Parental Rights of Rapists in Maryland --House Bill 1/Senate Bill 2.

Authorizing a court, under certain circumstances, to terminate the parental rights of an individual convicted of or found to have committed rape against the other parent that resulted in the conception of a child.

- Commissioner Diana Rubin testified on behalf of the bill before the House Judiciary Committee.
- Commissioner Lorna Forde testified before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on behalf of this bill.
- The PALS Committee drafted an Action Alert on this issue that was sent to all our newsletter recipients.
- We tweeted in support of this bill.

This bill passed the Maryland General Assembly and was signed into law by Governor Hogan.

2. Improving Pay Equity for Women - House Bill 512/ Senate Bill 377: Prohibiting employers with 15 or more employees from asking during the hiring process how much a job applicant earns and requiring employers to provide a salary range for each position to reduce salary inequity between men and women.

- Commissioner Tiffany Boiman testified before the Senate Finance Committee in favor of this bill.
- Commissioner Diana Rubin published an opinion piece supporting the bill in Maryland Matters.
- PALS drafted an Action Alert on this issue, shared it on our newsletter list and published on Facebook.
- We tweeted several times as the bill progressed.

This bill did not become law.

3. Medical Care for Pregnant Inmates: Bill 787/ Senate Bill 629: Requires each correctional facility in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and each local facility to have a written policy on medical care of pregnant inmates that addresses access to child placement resources and other issues. This policy must be provided to inmates at the time of a positive pregnancy test.

- Commissioner Lorna Forde testified in support of this bill before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.
- PALS drafted an Action Alert on this bill and sent it to our newsletter list.
- We posted on Facebook and tweeted in support of the bill.

This bill became law.

4. Human Trafficking Vacatur Bill: Senate Bill 869/ House Bill 1267: This legislation would allow the court to eliminate or “vacate” a criminal judgement against a victim of trafficking for crimes they were forced to commit while being trafficked, such as drug offenses or possession of weapons. The bill’s purpose is to avoid re-victimizing those who have been trafficked by holding them criminally responsible for acts which they were forced to do. A criminal conviction makes it very difficult for a trafficking victim to move past what has happened because it makes it hard to get jobs and secure housing.

- The Commission for Women submitted letters of support to the House Judiciary and Senate Judicial Proceeding Committees.
- PALS drafted an Action Alert on this bill and sent it to our newsletter list.
- We posted on Facebook and tweeted in support of the bill.

This bill was not passed.



Commissioner Tiffany Boiman testifies before the House Judiciary Committee



President Lorna Forde , Commissioners Nicole Drew, Donna Rojas and Angela Quigley accept a Women’s History Month Proclamation from Councilmembers Nancy Floreen and Nancy Navarro.

Emerging Leaders Committee

Chair: Angela Whitehead Quigley

Committee Members: Tracy Evans, Katie Smith

This year the CFW's Emerging Leaders program became its own standing committee. The committee's goals were to enable, educate, and encourage girls and young women in Montgomery County "to participate as equals in the community through acquisition of skills and competencies, information and resources." The committee provided a variety of programs for middle- and high-school girls in the County. Additionally, this year the CFW made a special effort to reach out to college-aged young women on civic engagement.



Universities at Shady Grove Civic Engagement Program

In October, the CFW partnered with students and faculty at the Universities at Shady Grove to put on a program entitled ***Making Laws, Making a Difference: A Tale of Two Rape Bills in Maryland*** where panelists from the Maryland state delegation and a prominent advocacy organization walked through the legislative process of the Rape Physical Resistance Bill and the Prior Bad Acts Bill and how students can identify concerns, find a voice, and amplify and utilize that voice. This event attracted approximately 70 attendees.

WLB Emerging Leaders Program

This year was the fifth year that the Emerging Leaders programming was offered at the CFW's annual Women's Legislative Briefing in January. Since the past few years had sold out, the program was expanded this year to better meet the needs of the students attending. Relying on feedback from previous years, the CFW ran two parallel tracks of the program, one specifically designed for middle school students and one tailored for high school students. The middle school students attended two sessions: ***Real News vs. Fake News: How Media Frames Our View*** and a hands-on workshop called ***Fact or Fiction? Crafting Your Own Fake News Combat Plan***. The high school students examined how to use social media to attack problems in their communities in ***Changing Your World Through Social Media***. The high school attendees then participated in a roundtable discussion about the #MeToo movement in ***Teens Tackling Sexual Harassment: Everyone Has a Part to Play***. The Emerging Leaders program at the WLB had XX attendees.

Real News vs. Fake News: How Media Frames Our View and a hands-on workshop called ***Fact or Fiction? Crafting Your Own Fake News Combat Plan***. The high school students examined how to use social media to attack problems in their communities in ***Changing Your World Through Social Media***. The high school attendees then participated in a roundtable discussion about the #MeToo movement in ***Teens Tackling Sexual Harassment: Everyone Has a Part to Play***. The Emerging Leaders program at the WLB had XX attendees.

Girl Power Contest

With the success of last year's Girl Power Contest, the CFW again honored Women's History Month (March) by engaging residents around the County in a discussion about the power of women in our nation. This year's theme asked individuals to submit personal statements about who will be the first female president. Throughout the month, the Commission received nearly 100 entries across four categories of competition: elementary school, middle school, high school, and adult. At the Commission's June meeting, the CFW welcomed the 2018 Girl Power Contest winners and runners-up. All the participants read their submissions, received an award, and took pictures with the Commission.

Emerging Leaders Committee



Choose Respect Healthy Teen Relationships Conference

As in past years, the CFW served on the planning committee of the annual Choose Respect Conference helmed by the State's Attorney's Office and the Family Justice Center. This conference, held in April, brought together government agencies, MCPS, law enforcement, advocacy organizations, local entertainment talent, and local corporations to plan a day that educated middle and high school students, as well as their parents, about what healthy relationships look like. More than 600 students from around the county participated in hands-on workshops exploring this topic. Additionally, over 100 students entered the PSA contest. The CFW not only assisted in the planning and outreach of the conference but several commissioners trained to be facilitators for the workshops, provided registration support on the day of the event, and helped judge a PSA contest.

Montgomery County Commission for Women 2018 Women's Legislative Briefing

Planning Committee Co-Chairs: Nicole Y. Drew and Vernisha Greene

Committee Members: Angela Quigley Whitehead (Emerging Leaders Chair), Tracy Evans

Celebrating its 38th year, the 2018 Women's Legislative Briefing was held on Sunday, January 28, 2018, at the Universities at Shady Grove. This year's theme was "**Enlightened, Empowered, Engaged**," with the goal of providing information to educate and empower the attendees to be ready to be engaged in the community. The legislative briefing strives to inform Marylanders about legislative issues of concern to women and families, including proposed bills that will be introduced in the Maryland General Assembly and the U.S. Congress. The Briefing included plenary sessions and a special Emerging Leaders series for youth in grades 6-12.



Commissioners Vernisha Greene and Nicole Drew
WLB Co-Chairs



Keynote Speaker Rosie Rios
43rd Treasurer of the United States

The Briefing began with a pre-conference President's Networking Reception where the Commission President hosted the leaders of the 65 organizations that co-sponsored the Briefing. The President's Networking Reception provides an opportunity to discuss best practices for collaboration on issues affecting women and families in Maryland. During the reception, community leaders from Montgomery County and other neighboring counties across Maryland networked and established relationships for potential partnerships.

Lorna Forde, President of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, and the 2018 Women's Legislative Briefing Co-Chairs, Nicole Y. Drew and Vernisha Greene, kicked off the Opening Ceremony with greetings to the attendees. Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett and Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker also addressed the attendees. As long-time supporters of the Commission and the Women's Legislative Briefing, the Montgomery County Commission for Women recognized both County Executive Leggett and County Executive Baker for their support throughout their respective tenures.

The Opening Ceremony continued with a rousing keynote address by Rosie Rios, the 43rd Treasurer of the United States. Treasurer Rios' keynote address primed the attendees for the plenary sessions that followed.



Secretary of Aging Rona Kramer



Montgomery County Commissioners¹⁰

Montgomery County Commission for Women 2018 Women's Legislative Briefing

The Montgomery County Commission for Women, along with the assistance of 65 co-sponsoring organizations, hosted over 700 attendees at the event. Many of the co-sponsoring organizations filled the exhibit room with their respective information on the various ways to get involved, support advocacy work and information helpful to the community. The Briefing was made possible by the generous funding and support from the Commission's sponsors: AARP (Topaz sponsor), Planned Parenthood of Maryland (Amethyst sponsor), and the Universities at Shady Grove (Title sponsor). Additional support came from individuals and from the Opal-level sponsors: BB&T; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. – Ft. Washington Alumnae Chapter; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. – Potomac Valley Section; Maryland National Organization for Women; Melissa McKenna; Sandy Spring Bank; The Links, Inc – The Patuxent River, MD Chapter; Velmec Educational Services; and the Women's Democratic Club of Montgomery County.



Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez enjoys a laugh with Montgomery County's First Lady Catherine Leggett.



Congressman John Sarbanes addresses the crowd.



Health and Safety for Women panelists

Montgomery County Commission for Women 2018 Women's Legislative Briefing

The plenary sessions featured legislators, prominent advocates and experts in their respective fields. Topics included:

- Advocating for Change
- Economic Justice
- Safety & Justice for Women: Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- Pre-K to Post Grad – All Things Education
- Healthcare for Women
- Ready to Run
- Justice Reform/Emerging Issues
- Safety & Justice for Women Part II: Human Trafficking

The Special Seminars for Emerging Leaders in Grades 6-12 focused on using social media responsibly and to promote good. The sessions were divided by middle- and high school grades and participants received age-appropriate interactive sessions. Treasurer Rios also spent time with the youth during the Emerging Leaders seminars as well.

At the Closing Ceremony, participants gathered to celebrate the induction of First Lady of Montgomery County Catherine Leggett, Councilmember Nancy Floreen and Delegate Sheila Hixson to the Montgomery County Women's History Archive. The archive was created in 2002 to recognize the contributions of women of historical significance to the county.

The Women's Legislative Briefing continues to be the Commission's popular signature annual event.



Emerging Leaders Panelists



WLB Co-Chair Vernisha Greene with Executive Director Jodi Finkelstein and Councilmember Nancy Floreen



Councilmember Marc Elrich with Volunteer Cara Via



— Montgomery County, MD — HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION COMMITTEE

In 2014, County Executive Ike Leggett created the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to increase understanding of the issue in Montgomery County and to develop interagency coordination of strategies for response and prevention. Overarching goals include:

1. Increasing the identification and prosecution of all parties supporting the organized crime of human trafficking to include traffickers, suppliers, transporters, advertisers and demand elements;
2. Elimination of human trafficking, and
3. Improving identification of and services for human trafficking victims

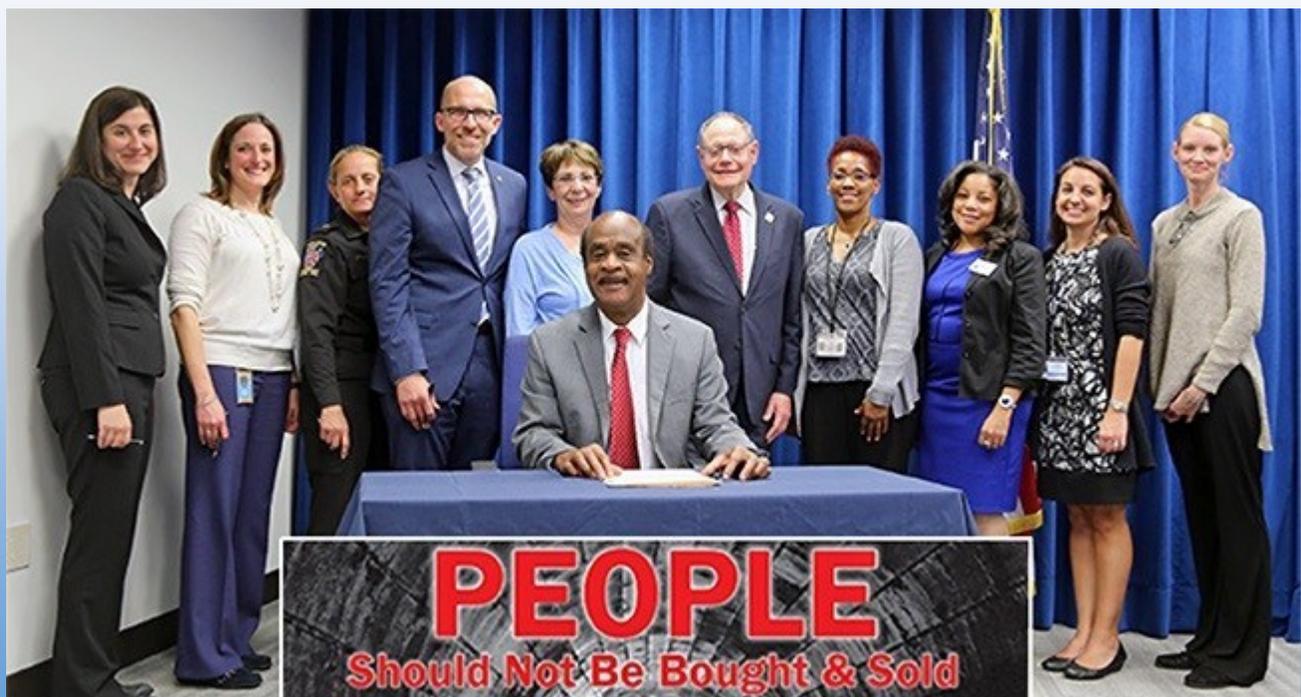
The task force is supported by the Montgomery County Commission for Women, and is divided into three committees: legislative, victim services, and education and outreach.

Legislative Committee: The legislative chair is Andrea Nunez, Legislative Aide for Councilperson Tom Hucker. The legislative committee is responsible for researching best practices within the criminal justice system to combat human trafficking. During this fiscal year, The Human Trafficking Task Force transitioned to a committee through legislation. Bill 27-17, Human Rights and Civil Liberties - Human Trafficking Prevention Committee – Established. The bill was signed into law during a public ceremony on October 19, 2017.

Victim Services Committee: This committee coordinates services for victims in the county. The victim services committee is co-chaired by: Heidi Alvarez, SAFE Center and Jessica Volz, Adventist Shady Grove Hospital.

Education and Outreach Committee: The committee is responsible for educating the community about human trafficking. The chair is Wendy Stickle, Director of Undergraduate Programs, University of Maryland, Shady Grove. A flyer about trafficking and a speakers bureau was also created.

Bill 27-17 Bill Signing



Montgomery County Commission for Women Programming Committee

Chairs: Nicole Drew, Britt Hogue

Committee Members: Monica Ramirez; Angela Whitehead Quigley; Tia Zeno

The CFW's 2018 programming offered 30 seminars, serving over several hundred residents. Consistent with the CFW's commitment to impact and aligning its work to a set of clear priorities that reflect the needs of the community, the programming committee crafted a mission for its engagement through seminars and workshops: To enrich the lives of women and families by Informing, Educating, Empowering and Supporting residents of the County.

The committee developed a calendar of programs that reflect the CFW's priorities, as follows:

1. **Economic Empowerment** – *Educate* residents on financial management and financial independence
 - Financial planning/independence seminars
2. **Health & Safety** – *Educate* and *empower* residents (women/men/families) on healthy relationships, domestic violence issues, personal safety, and self-care
 - Healthy dating seminars
 - Self Defense seminars
 - Choose Respect Conference
3. **Unique Challenges** – *Inform* and *support* underserved women facing complex challenges
 - Re-entry Support Group
 - Immigrant Women
4. **Under-representation in Workforce & Education** – *Inform* and *empower* women to succeed in fields in which women have been traditionally under-represented and under-promoted
 - Career Series
 - STEM Scholarship
5. **Fairness in Family Law** – *Inform* and *Educate* residents on family law and how to navigate the system during and post separation and divorce
 - Family Law seminars

A significant change based on feedback from 2017 was to offer Family Law and Self Defense workshops every month. These seminars are consistently well attended and topics that residents should have access to throughout the year. Other popular topics were featured in a series designed to educate and offer specific skill building opportunities. The Comeback Careers: Re-Entering the Workforce series, which was featured in September-October 2017, provided participants with tips for networking, interviewing, dressing for the workplace, and wage negotiation, and culminated in a panel discussion with women from the County sharing their experiences in nontraditional careers. The Financial Freedom series, which was offered in September-October 2017 and again in April-May 2018, addressed financial planning 101, money management after divorce, and retirement planning.

Programming served women, girls (Emerging Leaders), and aging women, and the evaluation of programs will measure for outcomes observed across all age groups. Community feedback is gathered at every event and the analysis and review of these surveys is supported by the CFW's programming and research & evaluation committees, with additional support from CountyStat.

Montgomery County Commission for Women Programming Committee

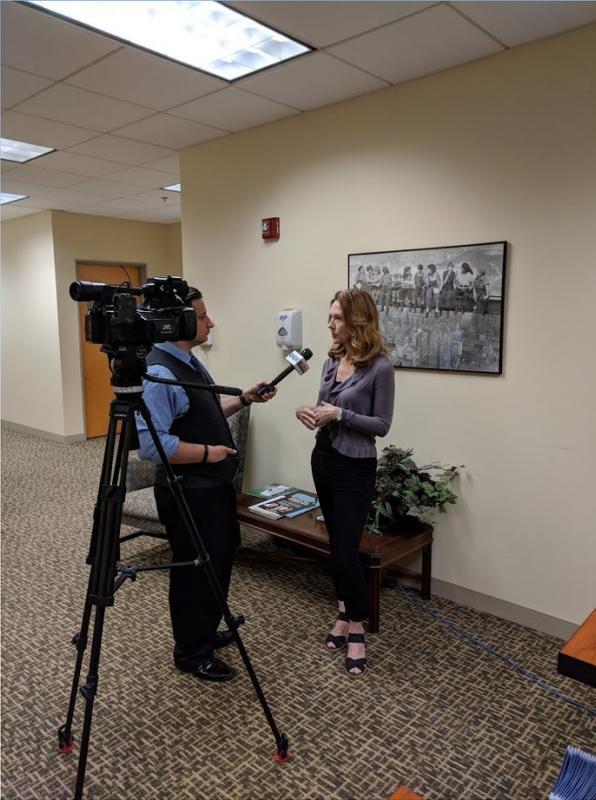
Programs at a Glance

Commissioner Angela Quigley with
RAD instructor Holly Solano.



Financial Planning 101
Instructors and participants

Montgomery County Commission for Women Marketing and Outreach



Chair: Tracy Evans

Committee Members: Tracy Evans, Donna Rojas, Monica Ramirez, and Erica Dean

The Marketing and Outreach Committee is new to the Commission this year. While the CFW already has a presence in the community the hope is that the committee can expand the CFW's use of social media so that it can more quickly reach the residents that rely heavily on this form of communication, including Emerging Leaders who may not have had as much access to CFW news in the past. We have focused on increasing the number of newsletter subscribers as well as those that follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Efforts also have been made to increase our presence on Instagram. The commission purchased a camera specifically for live streaming events on Facebook.

As important as social media has become, it is important to embrace traditional media as well. The committee will continue to look for ways for the CFW to be on television and print media. This past year the Commission was featured in the media on numerous occasions, including a story on the Girl Power Contest and the Women's Legislative Briefing. The re-entry program was also highlighted by local television.

Commissioner Tracy Evans speaks with a reporter

Montgomery County Commission for Women STEM Scholarship Committee

Committee Chair: Vernisha Greene

In FY15, the CFW established the *Commission for Women STEM Endowed Scholarship Fund* through the Montgomery College Foundation. The scholarship funds are awarded to students in need who are majoring in the STEM disciplines—(science, technology, engineering, and math) with the goal of helping to increase the pipeline of individuals entering these high demand fields. The Foundation is responsible for all of the administrative functions including identifying qualifying students and awarding the funds. The CFW raises funds through private donations to support the scholarship.

Ms. Jana Catuche, a second year student at Montgomery College, was the first student awarded a scholarship through the Commission's fund.

Montgomery County Commission for Women Re-Entry Program

Though we no longer provide counseling, we are pleased to partner with the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation to provide specialized services to women who are re-entering the community after serving prison time.

Women leaving prison face a multitude of challenges, including: finding and sustaining employment, family reunification, sustaining healthy relationships, and improving self-esteem.

Our women's support group aims to be a *safe* environment for women to gather and feel supported as they navigate the hurdles faced after being incarcerated. Topics covered by the group include:

- Mending Relationships
- Motivation: Staying on Track
- Self-Esteem and Personal Power
- How to Reach my Goals
- Job Readiness
- Communication and Assertiveness

Coordinators for the program are social workers Amy Meldau and Jessica Jones.

Montgomery County Commission for Women Budget Committee

Committee Chair: Giulia McPherson

Members: Katie Smith, Vernisha Greene and Nicole Drew

The Montgomery County Commission for Women Budget Committee aims to ensure that the Commission is well-resourced to carry out its robust programming activities. To do this, Commissioners engaged in the annual budget process by attending community budget forums, meeting with County officials and ensuring that the important work of the Commission was shared with key decision makers. The Committee worked to oppose proposed cuts to the Commission's budget and advocated for full funding in the coming Fiscal Year. The Budget Committee also works to ensure that strong internal processes are in place to monitor and track the Commission's resources. The Commission wishes to thank the County and its leadership for its continued financial support of the Commission.

Montgomery County Commission for Women Research and Evaluation Committee

Committee members:

Britt Hogue, Co-Chair
Diana Rubin, Co-Chair
Karmen Rouland
Tiffany Boiman
Tia Zeno,

The Research and Evaluation Committee made a strategic decision to move the Commission's work towards a more results and outcome- based model than it had pursued in the past. The goal of this approach is to track the effectiveness of our work in achieving our stated goals.

Goal Setting: We asked each Committee to develop written goals for its work for the year and specific metrics by which to measure that work. Each Committee's written goals and metrics were presented at the December Commission meeting. The Commission decided that each Committee would report on its progress towards achieving its goals every three months and at year end and we have done so.

Program Feedback Moved On-Line: We want to assure that our community programs are perceived as effective and useful by those who attend, and to track how many people attend to assure that we are covering topics the community finds useful. In the past, we have collected feedback from participants with paper and pencil surveys. However, we did not always have the manpower to analyze that feedback in a timely manner to inform future programming efforts. To streamline data collection and analysis, we moved to online feedback from participants with the help of a CountyStat data analyst in the Office of the County Executive. Now, following each Commission program, participants receive an email containing a link to an online survey for that program. The survey uses software that aggregates responses. The collected data can be downloaded to Excel or other data analysis tools for more refined analysis.

New Report on State of Women in Montgomery County: Ten years ago, the Commission issued a comprehensive *Report on the Status of Women in Montgomery County*. The Committee decided to work on issuing an updated report in January 2019 at the Women's Legislative Briefing to determine what progress women have made in the past decade, and where we still have issues and gaps.

We are currently working with a CountyStat data analyst in the Office of the County Executive to analyze current and historical data for women in Montgomery County. The data falls in seven areas:

- county demographics;
- employment and earnings;
- economic security and self-sufficiency;
- education and opportunity;
- public safety and the law;
- health and well-being; and
- political participation and women in leadership.

For the first time, report findings will also be made available to the public electronically, using a data visualization platform available through the county's website.

Re-entry Program Evaluation: The Committee met with the Re-entry program leaders to design an evaluation of the facilitated support program, which helps incarcerated women re-integrate back to society once they leave prison. Working with the social workers who run the group, we set goals for the program, discussed program inputs and outputs, and when to start the evaluation. The evaluation will begin in September 2018 and end in January 2019.

